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Wanted: North Texas Best Workplaces for CommutersSM

City of Richardson, Texas Instruments, are first North Texas organizations recognized by EPA for offering outstanding commuter benefits

(DALLAS-FORT WORTH) – The North Texas Clean Air Coalition (NTCAC) today challenged area businesses to earn a spot on **North Texas Best Workplaces for CommutersSM** list. The list showcases North Texas employers offering superior commuter benefits to employees, the kinds of benefits that lead many to switch from drive-alone commuting to options that help relieve traffic, air pollution and stress.

The prestigious recognition program is available to North Texas employers for the first time this year. Participating organizations must meet a *National Standard of Excellence* established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Like *Fortune Magazine's* '100 Best Places to Work' or *Working Mother's* '100 Best Companies for Working Mothers', **Best Workplaces for CommutersSM** is capturing the attention of businesses and organizations nationwide. More than 800 employers from 30 different states have qualified as **Best Workplaces for CommutersSM** since the initiative started two years ago. "Emissions from cars and trucks are big contributors to air pollution in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. When civic-minded companies lead the way by investing in **Best Workplaces for CommutersSM**, they help improve our air, our health and our quality of life," EPA Regional Administrator Richard E. Greene said.

Texas Instruments (TI) and the City of Richardson are the first North Texas employers approved by the EPA for **North Texas' Best Workplaces for CommutersSM** list. The EPA recognized Richardson Mayor Gary Slagel and TI at a news conference Tuesday launching Commute Solutions Month 2004.

"We offer great commuter benefits to our employees like subsidized bus and train passes, free on-call shuttles between TI buildings and reserved, prime parking spots for vanpools and carpools to encourage ridesharing," said Brenda Harrison, TI Worldwide Environmental, Safety & Health Director. "It's comparable to giving our employees a raise. They save money on gas and vehicle maintenance costs and arrive at work less stressed from driving in traffic."

Mayor Slagel challenged other North Texas cities and counties to follow Richardson's lead. "I'm proud Richardson is first but I hope we're not the last North Texas city to make the list," said Slagel. "I challenge every employer to get on the list. Imagine the message that would send to rest of the country about the quality of life we desire and offer in North Texas."

About the Best Workplaces for CommutersSM

Best Workplaces for CommutersSM is a free and voluntary program recognizing employers nationwide that offer a comprehensive package of commuter benefits. To make the list, employers must offer employees key commuting benefits such as transit passes, telework programs, bike commuter facilities, on-site day care and vanpool subsidies.

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More than 350 TI employees use carpools and vanpools, allowing them to use High Occupancy Vehicle lanes, cutting commute times and reducing fuel consumption. The company helps arrange ridesharing through a web database, matching workers who live in the same neighborhood and with similar working hours.

"It's all about creating a better quality of life, for our employees, their families and the community at large," said Phil Ritter, TI Senior Vice President, Public Affairs.

"There's so much bad news about traffic and air pollution we're pleased to have good news to report," said Dominic Lampe, Chairman of the North Texas Clean Air Coalition. "We'd like to see every North Texas employer on this list. I know my company (Raytheon) wants to be there because it demonstrates we're committed to making our community a better place to live and work."

The deadline to apply for the list is August 27, 2004. Organizations can enroll online at www.bwc.gov or www.bestworkplacesforcommuters.gov. The 2004 **Best Workplaces for Commuters**SM list will be announced in October and promoted locally through NTCAC.

Commute Solutions Month

The launch of the sign-up period for the **Best Workplaces for Commuters**SM list coincides with **Commute Solutions Month**. The theme of **Commute Solutions Month** is "try parking it." During June, North Texas employers are encouraged to help commuters learn about various options available to them. Each week has a different theme that will be promoted through marketing and employer outreach campaigns.

- May 31 – June 4 is "Vanpool/Carpool Week"
- June 7 – 11 is "Try Transit Week"
- June 14 – 18 is "Bike/Walk/Brown Bag Lunch Week"
- June 21 – 25 is "Telework/Flexible Work Schedule Week"

2004 Commuter Challenge

June 1 also marks the kick off of the 2004 **Commuter Challenge**. North Texas commuters who "try parking it" this summer could win free airline tickets on Southwest Airlines along other great prizes. The Web-based contest challenges drivers to "try parking it" at least once a week and ride public transit, carpool, vanpool, bike, walk or telecommute. Everytime they choose an alternative commute option, drivers may enter the **Commuter Challenge** at www.tryparkingit.com. Commuters document on-line how they commuted to work or school and the number of miles they would have driven. NTCAC tracks the total miles saved for the entire region through the **Commuter Challenge**.

Donna Moreland of TI was last year's grand prize winner. Normally she drove 44 miles roundtrip from her home in Lewisville to TI's South Campus in Dallas. To enter the **Commuter Challenge**, she telecommuted instead of driving to work some days. "Working from home for a couple of days during the contest gave me the chance to save miles and still satisfy work requirements," she said. "I'm definitely happy that TI gives us the flexibility to work from home when it fits work and personal needs." Moreland used her two-roundtrip Southwest Airlines tickets to go to New York.

For more information about the Commuter Challenge or Commute Solutions Month, visit www.TryParkingIt.com.

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The NTCAC was formed in 1993 to educate North Texans about air quality and encourage individuals to "do their share for cleaner air." Members of the NTCAC include the North Central Texas Council of Governments, North Texas Commission, Greater Dallas Chamber, Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce, Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART), The Fort Worth Transportation Authority (the T), and numerous individuals and businesses.